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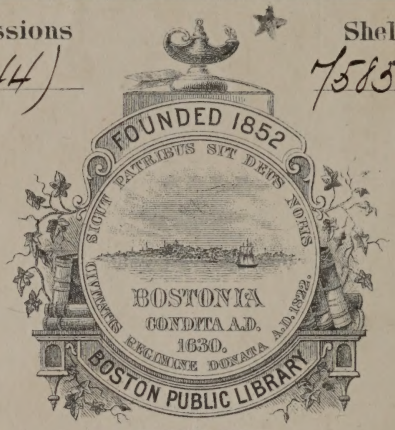

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Estate of S. E. Sewall

April 29, 1891.

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SENATE..... .....No. 56.

REPORT AND RESOLVES

ON THE

SUBJECT OF SLAVERY.

B

(26. 264)

Estate of L. E. Sewall.

Apr. 29, 1891.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

House of Representatives, Jan. 16, 1836.

Ordered, That so much of the Governor's Speech as relates to the Abolition of Slavery, together with such documents on the subject as have been transmitted by his Excellency to the Legislature, be referred to a Joint Special Committee; and

Messrs. Moseley, of *Newburyport*,
Corbet, of *Worcester*, and
Lucas, of *Plymouth*, are appointed.

Sent up for concurrence.

L. S. CUSHING, *Clerk.*

In Senate, Jan. 20, 1836.

Concurred:

And Messrs. Lunt and Chapin, are joined.

CHAS. CALHOUN, *Clerk.*

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The Joint Special Committee, to whom was referred so much of the Governor's Message as relates to the Abolition of Slavery, together with certain documents upon the same subject, communicated to the Executive by the several Legislatures of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama, transmitted by his Excellency to the Legislature, and hereunto annexed, have considered the same, and ask leave, respectfully, to submit the following

REPORT:

Your Committee have devoted to this momentous subject, the deep and serious attention which its merits obviously demand. The intense interest which the question is exciting throughout the whole country; the requirement of our great national compact, enjoining respect for the legislative proceedings of other states; the common bonds of sympathy, interest, and brotherhood, which connect the various sections of the Union, could none of them fail of due weight in our minds. But your Committee find enough in the earnest and united appeals of the

several legislatures above named, to induce them to meet the whole question promptly and fairly, and to respond in the most explicit manner, to the strong demands which they make upon the justice and honor of the Commonwealth.

Your Committee feel themselves called upon entirely to disclaim the opinion, if it any where prevails, that the consideration of this matter is to be avoided by them, in consequence of its exciting nature. They feel that the time has arrived for its consideration; that it cannot and ought not to be avoided; that it ought to be met at its outset by all the powers of manly and intelligent minds; and that every day's delay only hastens the progress of those tremendous consequences, which it is the duty of every good citizen to deprecate, and, by every honest means in his power, to endeavor to avert.

The language of the various documents in the possession of the Committee is such as needs no comment to vouch for its sincerity. The citizens of the slave-holding states, evidently consider it the most important political question which could be presented to their minds. They believe, and state, that the tendency of the proceedings of certain abolitionists, and abolition societies, in the Northern states, is to unsettle the character of their slave population, and to prepare the way for all the horrors of a servile insurrection. In case of such an event, however the master might be able eventually to overpower the slave, it is certain that it could not be effected without the great pecuniary loss and ruin of many; without an immense sacrifice of their own lives, and of the lives of those most dear to them; without the frequent commission of the worst crimes which fill up the black catalogue of human enormities. The mind revolts at once from such a spectacle. It is difficult

to conceive how a humane man can regard an event like this as possible without the profoundest sentiments of unmingled horror. It is not, perhaps, material to the question, whether the apprehension be well or ill-founded; or whether the contingency be near or more remote. It is sufficient that the slave-holding states, (infinitely the best judges in the case) look upon it in this light, and call upon us by every motive which ought to influence our conduct, to afford them such relief as it is in our power to offer.

The question which first presents itself, as to the right of the non-slave-holding states to interfere at all in the existing relations between master and slave, is a point so well understood, that it is hoped no argument need be submitted to the Legislature upon this part of the subject. Whatever emotions such a view may excite in the mind of the philanthropist, the right of the master to the slave is as undoubted as the right to any other property. It is recognized by the well understood admissions of the Constitution. It is recognized by the laws of the land, and the tribunals of justice; and any attempt, whether direct or indirect, to deprive the slave-holder of this property, as of any other, is a violation of the fixed laws of social policy, as well as of the ordinary rules of moral obligation. If slavery be an evil, the slave-holder declares to us that it is no evil of his own creating, but that he is able and willing to endure the burden, and neither seeks nor desires any intervention of ours. If it be a sin, he is equally ready to incur the entire responsibility; and will not submit to our interference, because it can bring nothing to him and his but disaster and ruin. Above all, his argument (and it would seem to be unanswerable,) is, that *the property is his own;* and that

no man or body of men can impair its security, without doing him the deepest injustice and wrong. One would think this might be sufficient to satisfy the most ardent friend of abolition in the world.

The abolitionist, however, alleges on the other hand, that his motives are entirely misapprehended, and that it is no part of his desire or intention to produce those terrible results which are the imputed consequences of his conduct. He states it to be his wish, not to operate upon the feelings of the slave, but to affect the mind of the master, by arguments and appeals, addressed to his moral and religious sensibilities. If such be the case, it would seem that the means employed are singularly inappropriate to the proposed end. The argument, however, at best, is entirely fallacious in its nature; although, if, as it were charitable to hope, it deceives the abolitionist himself, it can surely deceive no one else. It is too plain to be denied, that the kind of publications which have issued from the abolition press, must either directly or indirectly operate upon the slave himself; that their only effect can be, to suggest to him, that his position in society is not only different from his deserts, but that his detention in that state is contradictory of his natural rights, and sinful in the sight of heaven. It is easy to foresee the consequences of such impressions fixed in the mind of the slave; and equally easy to see that no other possible consequences can result from the efforts of the abolitionist. The idea of thus affecting the mind of the master, so as in any way to promote the emancipation of the slave, would seem to your committee almost too unreasonable to be very seriously entertained. Apart from the consideration, that such a supposition necessarily involves the sacrifice of his sources of wealth,

often of his means of living, and as would be, no doubt, frequently the case, the reduction of himself and his family to want, and perhaps beggary; the slave-holder avows, in the most explicit language, that he will not for a moment listen to any such proposition; and that he cannot view it in any other light, than that of the deepest injury which could be inflicted. There is no doubt of his right to make such an avowal. There is no doubt that the proposal to him to part with his property upon the terms suggested, is one to which he will never consent. It were unreasonable to expect it. No history exhibits any such instance. No deduction from any of the known principles of human conduct can show with ordinary plausibility that it might be anticipated. So far from having the least influence to convince the slave-holder that domestic slavery is a sin to be immediately expiated, the arguments of the abolitionist only irritate whatever is most excitable and vehement in his nature, and lead him, rather than submit to their reiteration, to look with calmness upon a crisis which would disturb and convulse all the elements of our social organization, and would totally dissolve all those countless ties which God and nature constituted; which were cemented by the blood of a united ancestry, shed upon the field, and which should have become more closely woven by the efforts of wisdom and experience through the lapse of many succeeding years.

The question presented to us is obviously, therefore, one of immense moment; and it is our duty to consider what measures it may be proper for us to adopt, upon a reasonable and dispassionate view of the whole subject.

The legislatures of the five states, which have transmitted to us the documents above referred to, recommend

the immediate use of such means, as will effectually suppress and prevent the formation of abolition societies, and the enactment of such penal statutes, as will deter, or suitably punish, those who print, publish or distribute the various productions of the abolition press. It is for us to determine how far it is safe or proper for us to proceed in compliance with this request.

The liberty of the press is declared by the constitution of this Commonwealth, to be essential to public freedom; and, even if it were possible, it would be a matter of very grave deliberation, whether it were desirable to restrain or control it by any express statutory limitation. The consequences of such legislation, in its application to other contingencies, are such as cannot be altogether and fully anticipated. It is enough, in the opinion of your committee, that the precedent seems of dangerous tendency; and not the less to be avoided, because its probable results are, to a certain extent, indeterminate. It is well understood, that the licentious use either of the press or the tongue, renders the party amenable to the common law jurisdiction of the courts of justice; and your committee are of opinion, that this jurisdiction is amply sufficient to provide for all circumstances which can arise in this Commonwealth. Besides, there is a powerful influence already at work amongst us, stronger than any law—the force of public sentiment, directed by the best intelligence, and sustained by the highest character, which sympathises with our southern brother, as well as with his slave, and which looks indignantly upon every movement calculated to disturb him in the possession of his just rights, or to endanger the peace and security of his domestic or social relations. And your committee believe, that an unsound and intemperate enthusiasm is best

met by such influences. They believe that the experience of society warrants them in this conclusion; that passions have been excited, and powers concentrated, in resistance to the enactments of a positive statute, which might have slept in the absence of its provisions; that the wildest extravagances have sometimes triumphed against the execution of an untimely law, which, without that law, would have weakened and dissipated themselves by their own fruitless struggles; and that nothing, which is not founded upon the eternal principles of truth and justice, can ever long prevail against the silent but irresistible force of public disapprobation.

The abolitionist, indeed, as might be expected, not only denies altogether the propriety of enacting penal laws upon this subject, but contends that the expression of any legislative opinion, against what he considers his right of free discussion, would contravene those well known principles of public liberty, upon which he justifies his own motives and conduct. Your committee differ entirely from this doctrine. It might, perhaps, seem even and little inconsistent with liberal dealing, for the anti-slavery societies to claim for themselves the privilege of unlimited discussion, and the free expression of whatever opinion, and to deny to the legislature the right of publishing to the good people of the Commonwealth its own deliberate conclusions, upon this or any other subject. Indeed, a recurrence to the fundamental principles of the constitution will show at once, that the power of making laws is no more clearly defined, than the duty of the legislature, from time to time, to afford the people the aid of its advisement and direction upon matters of public moment. Especially, if the weight of its influence be requisite, in order to restrain licentiousness, and to maintain

the public peace and order, no duty, in the opinion of your committee, could be more plain. *The right of free discussion*, which some say may be infringed by any legislative action, is undoubtedly a most sacred right, and most inestimable privilege. But, as it is understood by extravagant men in the discussion of many exciting subjects, it would prove one of the deepest curses that could possibly befal any country. The truth is, that the unlimited exercise even of legal rights may be not only inexpedient, but improper in the extreme. For all men uniformly to insist upon claiming all which might belong to them, would not only constantly embitter all social relations, but would disturb and overturn all civil society. The legal power may often be unquestioned, where the moral obligation expressly contradicts it. The apostle himself instructs our weakness upon this point; where he declares *many things inexpedient, which are nevertheless lawful.* And, indeed, whoever has reflected much upon the principles which connect and harmonise society, cannot but have perceived, that, without the constant recognition of this rule, no political organization could exist for a single day. Indeed, it is seen that the discussion of this very question, as it is discussed by the abolition agents, has been, in the first place, to defeat the very object proposed, by rivetting the chain more strongly to the neck of the slave; and next, to rouse in the mind of the master, the warmest and most determined spirit of resistance to what he accounts an invasion of his property, and an infraction of his rights.

Indeed, the liberty of free discussion, to the extent claimed by some descriptions of people, would, in the opinion of your committee, be absolutely destructive to

every domestic tie, and entirely subversive of the most fundamental principles of all civil society.

The main argument, however, relied on by the abolitionist, whenever the consequences of his conduct are laid before him, is, that "we must discharge our duty, and leave the event." The rule is acknowledged to be wholesome; but its application to the case is unequivocally denied. There can be no doubt that whenever a plain line of duty is set before an accountable being, he is bound to pursue it, regardless of personal inconveniences or dangers. But the rule will be found, in its application to the business of life, subject to many exceptions and many limitations. Besides, it can in no case be assumed as of general obligation, except where the point of duty is well defined and unquestionable. Wherever the question may admit of doubt, the obligation becomes weakened, and sometimes wholly inoperative. Especially in those questions often occurring, where men entertain great and irreconcilable differences of opinion, to pursue a course of conduct supposed to be abstractly right, but inevitably productive of immediate evil consequences, is not only out of the line of duty, but inconsistent with either human or divine legislation. It is upon the constant and daily recognition of this principle, that all human institutions depend for their preservation. Upon any other theory, pursued to its legitimate results, the whole world would be involved in a state of indiscriminate and inextricable confusion. Religion, as well as the soundest deductions of mere human reason, forbids us to "do evil, in order that good may come." A mistaken view of the pursuit of duty, has often been productive of civil discord; has often kindled the fires of martyrdom; has often set the world in arms; and it may be fairly concluded, that he is an unsafe theo-

rist, who forgets that wisdom and prudence are the very first elements of moral obligation.

The two other arguments chiefly relied upon, seem to be, in the first place, *that the most unlimited discussion is permitted upon other questions of public interest;* and the temperance cause is the instance particularly adduced, and next, *that in the earlier days of the republic, the leading men of the south and elsewhere: Jefferson, Madison, Jay, Franklin, and many others, not only spoke, but wrote upon this subject in the freest and most open manner.* Your Committee, however, are unable to perceive the justice of the parallel between this question and the temperance reformation. In the one instance, the matter is of the most general interest possible, and of the most direct and positive application to every portion of the Union; in the other, the interest of the northern man is, at best, of an entirely indirect and incidental character; and, upon a strict construction, a matter in which he has no concern whatever. With regard to the other argument, your Committee can only say, that these very gentlemen, with their colleagues, settled the question of slavery as it now exists, and imposed it upon their descendants, whether it be a burden or a sin; that their discussion of it was at a time when no immediate danger was anticipated, and when no irritated feelings had been excited upon the subject; that all their acknowledged wisdom could devise no remedy for the evil; that the abolitionist cannot now propose, does not offer to propose, any feasible plan of emancipation; that no southern man now expresses any opinions like those alluded to; and that your Committee believe it to be the unquestionable duty of those who feel most deeply upon this topic, to leave the whole affair in the keeping of a merciful Providence, who

will not require of any man or nation, an unreasonable account.

It is upon these views that your Committee wish to express their most mature and deliberate convictions as to this great question. They feel that the conduct of the abolitionist is not only wrong in policy, but erroneous in morals. However sincere an enthusiast may be, and there are, no doubt, many degrees of sincerity amongst this body, his zeal cannot excuse him from the weight of moral accountability. The evil consequences which have already attended their efforts, and those infinitely more evil likely to ensue, unless they should be in some way arrested in their career, must be answered, at some period, at a higher tribunal than even public opinion. Your Committee have no right to pre-judge this cause; or to anticipate how strict an account will be required of the grounds of motives; and how far an honest investigation of their reasonableness as well as their sincerity will be necessary in order to palliate the extravagances of human actions. It is the business of your Committee to apply to the transactions of life the ordinary causes from which they result; and, so far as may be in their power, to recommend those measures which may seem best adapted to stay the progress of evil. They feel that there is a deep responsibility resting upon them; and while they cannot avoid their duty, they have no desire to shrink from its discharge.

Whatever, indeed, may be the action of the legislature upon this subject, your Committee are determined to fulfil their duty to the state, and to our common country, in the most firm and faithful manner. In remembering that they are men of Massachusetts, they are incapable of meanly forgetting that they are also Americans. How-

ever they may regret the condition of slavery every where in the world, they have no sympathy with that diseased sensibility which, in its commiseration for the slave, wilfully shuts its eyes against the fatal consequences of conduct, which is likely to involve both master and slave in one common destruction. They have no sympathy with that false benevolence, which, in order to liberate the slave, is willing to destroy the hope of liberty itself, by plunging the country in all the horrors of civil war, with bloodshed, anarchy and despotism, the sure attendants in its train. In a word, they cannot but deem that philanthropy not only officious, but extravagant and inexcusable, which will intermeddle in the proper and peculiar affairs of others, not only against their will, but to their manifest and inevitable detriment. To those who are amenable to no other argument, there is an appeal, which this legislature cannot safely resist. One of its first duties here, is solemnly to swear that it will support the constitution of the United States; and your Committee beg gentlemen to consider how they will answer the observation of that oath, by promoting or countenancing those wild schemes, which cannot but deprive their brother of the guaranty, which that constitution does provide for his security in the possession of his property, and all its legal rights.

The appeal which is addressed to us by our sister states is indeed of the most solemn and affecting character. Its language is often ardent, in the opinion of some it may be reprehensible. But your Committee believe, that the character of the good people of this Commonwealth is somewhat too well understood; that its spirit and honor are to well known, to allow the legislatures of other states to expect to extort any thing from us which does not address itself to our reasonable convictions. They appeal

to our justice as men; to our sympathies as brethren; to our patriotism as citizens; to the memory of the common perils and triumphs of our ancestors and theirs; to all the better emotions of our nature; to our respect for the constitution; to our regard for the laws; to our value for the institutions of the country; to our hope for the security of all those blessings which the UNION, and that only, can preserve to us.

In view of these motives, therefore, which surely cannot be disregarded, and for the reasons above set forth, and after the most mature deliberation, your Committee have determined to recommend, and do recommend, the following Preamble and Resolves to the acceptance of the legislature.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

In the Year of our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and Thirty-Six.

WHEREAS, the legislatures of our sister states of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Alabama, have transmitted to the legislature of this Commonwealth, certain memorials and resolutions, relating to the subject of domestic slavery within their limits; which state that the proceedings of certain persons, therein styled abolitionists, are dangerous to the public peace, are calculated to excite the slave to insurrection and revolt, and to render not only the property but the lives of our southern brethren insecure; and whereas, they call upon us by the most interesting and solemn motives, to aid them in arresting the progress of this evil; and whereas, in our opinion, the institution of domestic slavery is one in which, as it is settled by the constitution of these United States, we have no title to interfere, especially against the consent of those whose interests may be most dearly affected by such a course; and whereas, it is our highest political duty to endeavor to maintain the most friendly

and intimate relations with all the states of this great and happy Union, and to discountenance every thing which may tend to its disturbance and dissolution; therefore,

Be it resolved, by the Senate and House of Representatives, in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, That this legislature, regarding the constitution of these United States as the most sacred and inestimable political inheritance which could have been transmitted to us by our ancestors, looks indignantly upon every thing calculated to impair its permanency; and that we deem it our high duty to maintain the Union, which it secures, at every hazard, and by every sacrifice, not inconsistent with our known duties as men, citizens and christians.

Resolved, That this legislature distinctly disavows any right whatever in itself, or in the citizens of this Commonwealth, to interfere in the institution of domestic slavery in the southern states; it having existed therein before the establishment of the constitution; it having been recognized by that instrument; and it being strictly within their own keeping.

Resolved, That this legislature, regarding the agitation of the question of domestic slavery as having already interrupted the friendly relations which ought to exist between the several states of this Union; and as tending permanently to injure, if not altogether to subvert, the principles of the Union itself; and believing that the good expected by those who excite its discussion in the non-slave-holding states, is, under the circumstances of the case, altogether visionary, while the immediate and future evil is great and certain;—does hereby express its entire disapprobation of the doctrines upon this subject avowed, and the general measures pursued by such as agitate the question; and does earnestly recommend to them care-

fully to abstain from all such discussion, and all such measures, as may tend to disturb and irritate the public mind.

Resolved, That this legislature entirely disapproves of all those tumultuous and riotous proceedings everywhere, which have arisen from the agitation of this question; and, believing that the good citizens of this Commonwealth entertain a sacred regard for the authority of the laws, and for the preservation of the public peace, this legislature earnestly recommends and demands that, by their influence and example, and by their quiet and peaceable demeanor, they will do all in their power to prevent the recurrence of such scenes; and it enjoins upon all magistrates and civil officers, the firm and faithful discharge of the duties entrusted to them, to maintain order and decorum, and to uphold the dignity of the Commonwealth.

Resolved, That his Excellency the Governor be requested to transmit copies of this report and these resolves to the executive of each of those states which have addressed us upon the subject.

By order of the Committee.

GEORGE LUNT.

REPORT AND RESOLUTIONS

OF

NORTH CAROLINA.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE,
Raleigh, N. C. 28th Dec., 1835.

His Excellency the Governor of Massachusetts.

SIR,

In obedience to the request of the General Assembly of this State, I have the honor of sending you a copy of the preamble and resolutions on the subject of incendiary publications, adopted by that body ; which it is requested you will please submit to the Legislature of your State.

I have the honor to be,

With high considerations,

Your ob't servant,

RICHARD D. SPAIGHT.

Preamble and Resolutions on the subject of Incendiary Publications.

Whereas, the proceedings of certain persons in the middle and eastern states during the past summer, have furnished clear proof of a determination to promote, by means the most unjustifiable and iniquitous, the abolition of slavery in the states of the Union in which it now exists ; and Whereas, as well from the wealth, number, and assiduity of the persons engaged in this criminal purpose, as from the means they have resorted to, to accomplish their designs, serious fears are entertained that our property, the peace of our country, and the Union of the states may be endangered thereby—this General Assembly feel called upon by a just regard for the interests and happiness of the good people of this state, and of the other states similarly situated, as well as by an anxious solicitude for the preservation of the Union, which at present so happily unites all the states into one confederated people, to declare the opinions, and set forth the purposes of the people of this state, in language at once firm, clear, decided, and temperate.

When the American Colonies first united for protection from the encroachments upon their rights and privileges, made by the king and parliament of Great Britain, they assumed the character of sovereign and independent states—they united under an organization which was in strictness, a league—leaving the direct power of operating upon the citizens of each state, with its own constituted authorities ; and when the present constitution was adopted, though to all general purposes it constituted the people of the states one people, with one government, having a direct legislative, judicial, and executive authority over the citizens, yet it declared by a specific enumeration, the powers intended to be granted to this government, and expressly declared, out of abundant caution that the powers not granted, belonged to the states respectively, or to the people. At the time when this constitution was adopted, as well at the time when

the confederation was formed, each of the states recognized the right of its citizens to hold slaves. The constitution contains no grant of a power to any department of the government to control the people of any state in regard to its domestic institutions—certainly not in regard to that now in question. It is clear, therefore, that the whole power of regulating this subject within the state of North Carolina is vested now in the authorities of this state, as fully as on the day the independence of the states was declared; for though much difference of opinion has existed as to the principle upon which the grants of power in the Constitution are to be interpreted, no one has ever had the temerity to assert, that the General Government may assume a power which is not granted in terms, and is not necessary as an incident to the proper exercise of a granted power.

We have, therefore, an undoubted right to regulate slavery amongst ourselves, according to our own views of justice and expediency—to continue, or abolish—to modify or mitigate it in any form and to any extent, without reference to any earthly authority, and solely responsible to our own consciences and the judgment of the Governor of the universe. No other state, and no other portion of the people of any other state, can claim to interfere in the matter, either by authority, advice, or persuasion; and such an attempt, from whatever quarter it may come, must ever be met by us with distrust, and repelled with indignation.

Upon the other states of the Union, our claim is clear and well founded. If they were foreign states, it would be a violation of national law in them, either to set on foot themselves, or permit their own subjects to set on foot, any project, the object or tendency of which would be to disturb our peace by arraying one portion of society against another. The constitution which unites us, and by virtue of which we have ceased to be foreign states in regard to each other, and have become bound in the closest union, and the most intimate relations, for the promotion of the common defence and general welfare, cannot be supposed to have lessened our mutual obligations, or to have made an act harmless which would have been gross wrong, had we continued in respect to each other as we now are in respect to other nations, in war, enemies, and only in peace, friends. It is evident, on the contrary, that every duty of friend-

ship towards each other, which before existed, is by our Union heightened in its obligation, and enforced by motives the most exalted and endearing. Whatever institution or state of society we think proper to establish or permit, is by no other state to be disturbed or questioned. We enter not into the inquiry, whether such institution be deemed by another state just or expedient. It is sufficient that we think proper to allow it. To protect us from attempts to disturb what we allow, and they approve, would be to support not our institutions, but their own opinions,—to exercise a supervising power over our legislation, and to insult us with a claim of superiority in the very offer to discharge the duty which our relations authorize us to require. As our right is indisputable, to regulate exclusively, according to our own notions, the interior relations of of our own people, the duty of preventing every attempt to disturb what we have established, results from the simple fact, that we have established it. And the propriety and impropriety in the view of others of such regulations as we have pleased to make, can never either enhance or lessen the duty of such prevention.

We do full justice to the general sentiment and feelings of our fellow citizens in other states, and are fully aware that the attempts to injure us are made by a small minority,—composed, probably, of many misguided and some wicked men ; and that these attempts meet with no favor, but on the other hand, with marked disapprobation from the large majority of the communities in which they are made. Still, it must be recollected, that from the nature of the means employed, the danger to us is the same, whether these means are put into activity by a contemptible minority, or are sanctioned and adopted by the whole body of the people. An incendiary pamphlet performs its office of mischief as effectually when issued under the patronage of twenty, as of twenty thousand persons. Its efficacy depends upon its circulation, not upon the weight of authority which supports it.

While, therefore, we are justly sensible of the sympathy for us, and the indignation against those who seek to disturb our peace, expressed by large and intelligent assemblies of our northern and eastern brethren, we cannot but know, that these expressions do in no way diminish our danger. While the abolitionists are allowed to

pursue their course with no other check than the disapprobation of their fellow citizens, that disapprobation will little affect them, and bring no support or consolation under the evils that are likely to befal us. We ask not sympathy, for we feel not, from the institutions we possess, that we suffer injury. We ask protection, not to maintain our authority by force of arms, for to that we know ourselves entirely adequate, but we ask protection from the necessity of resorting to such force for that purpose. We ask not assistance, to put down insurrectionary movements among our slaves, for should such occur, we are fully able to put them down ourselves. But we ask, that our slaves and ourselves may be relieved from external interference. Left to themselves, we believe our slaves a laboring class, as little dangerous to society as any in the world. But we do ask, and think we have a right to demand, that others shall not teach them evil, of which they think not themselves ; that they should not be stimulated by the base and violent of other lands, to deeds of bloodshed, of which the evils to us will be temporary—to the slaves themselves dreadful and lasting ; that we may not be compelled, by a factitious necessity, to adopt measures of rigor, which such necessity only could justify. By some it seems to have been supposed, that the practices of the abolitionists cannot be put down by legislation, consistently with the constitutions of the states in which they live. If this were true, it would furnish no answer to our just complaint, and afford no excuse to those states for permitting such practises to continue. The duty, the performance of which we invoke, is binding upon those states, and they have no right to disable themselves from its performance by an organic law, more than to refuse its performance by an ordinary act of legislation. The obligation being perfect, cannot be dissolved by any arrangement of the party on whom the obligation rests. If therefore, any such difficulty did in reality exist, we should have a right to ask, that the organic law which produced it, should be so altered as to remove it. But does any such difficulty exist ? The one supposed is this : That as the abolitionists seek to accomplish their object by the issue of inflammatory publications, a law to arrest their progress would be a violation of the liberty of the press. This difficulty has its origin in a total misconception of what is meant by the liberty of the press ;

which means not the right to publish without resposibility, but to publish without previous permission. If it meant the former, the liberty of the press would be the greatest curse which could be inflicted on a nation. Where every man has a right to publish what he pleases, but is responsible to the law for the nature and tendency of his publication, the press is free. If he has the right to publish without such responsibility, the press is licentious. If the latter right exist, it is the only instance known to our laws, of a right to act without any acccuntability for the action. Every man has a right to carry arms for his own defence, and that right is as clear and as important as the freedom of the press; yet it was never supposed that he who used arms for violence or bloodshed, was therefore irresponsible, because he had a right to carry them for defence.

But it is unnecessary further to set forth the justice of our claims on our brethren of the north and east, and their capability, if they were desirous, of complying with our just demands. We believe that our property, the lives of our fellow citizens, and the peace and harmony of our country, are threatened by the measures of these misguided and wicked men; and though we feel the greatest attachment for the Union, and would do all in our power to strengthen and perpetuate it, yet we are not ready to surrender those very rights and blessings which that Union was formed to protect: And should the means now adopted, prove ineffectual in stopping the progress of these attacks on our peace and happiness, we would invoke the aid of the other slave-holding states, that there may be concert of action in taking such steps as the occasion may demand.

THOMAS G. POLK,

Chairman of the Committee of 26.

1. *Resolved*, That North Carolina alone has the right to legislate over the slaves in her territory, and any attempt to change their condition, whether made by Congress, the legislatures, or the people of other states, will be regarded as an invasion of our just rights.

2. *Resolved*, That we are ready and willing to make, on this subject, a common cause with the rest of our sister slave-holding states, and hereby invite their co-operation in passing such laws and

regulations as may be necessary to suppress and prevent the circulation of any incendiary publications within any of the slave-holding states.

3. *Resolved*, That the thanks of this state are due to, and the kindest feelings of the citizens thereof are cherished towards, their brethren of the north, who have magnanimously sustained the principles of our federal government, and recognized and maintained our rights against the fanatics of those states.

4. *Resolved*, That our sister states are respectfully requested to enact penal laws, prohibiting the printing within their respective limits, all such publications as may have a tendency to make our slaves discontented with their present condition, or incite them to insurrection.

5. *Resolved*, That although, by the constitution, all legislative power over the district of Columbia, is vested in the Congress of the United States, yet we would deprecate any legislative action, on the part of that body, towards liberating the slaves of that district, as a breach of faith towards those states by whom the territory was originally ceded, and will regard such interference as the first step towards a general emancipation of the slaves of the south.

6. *Resolved*, That the governor be, and he is hereby requested to forward a copy of this preamble and resolutions to each of our senators and representatives in Congress, and to the executive of each of the states of the Union, with a request that the same be submitted to their respective legislatures.

Read three times, and ratified in General Assembly, December 19th, 1835.

WM. H. HAYWOOD, Jr., *S. H. C.*
WM. D. MOSELEY, *S. S.*

A true copy.

WM. HILL, *Secretary.*

REPORT AND RESOLUTIONS

OF

SOUTH CAROLINA.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT,
Columbia, Dec. 20th, 1835.

To His Excellency the Governor of the State of Massachusetts.

SIR,

In obedience to the instructions of both branches of the Legislalature of the State of South Carolina, I beg leave to transmit you the enclosed Report and Resolutions, with a request, that you will lay them before the Legislature of your State.

I have the honor to be,

With great consideration,

Your most obt. humble servant,

GEO. McDUFFIE.

REPORT

Of the Joint Committee of Federal Relations on so much of the Governor's Message as relates to the Institution of Domestic Slavery, and the Incendiary proceedings of the Abolitionists in the non-slave-holding States.

Mr. Hamilton of the Senate, from the committee of federal relations, submitted the following report :

The joint committee of federal relations, to whom was referred so much of His Excellency the Governor's message, as relates to the institution of domestic slavery, and the incendiary proceedings of the abolitionists in the non-slave-holding states, beg leave to report :

That they have given to this subject the deep and anxious consideration which both from its intrinsic importance, and from the profound and patriotic reflections of the executive, it so obviously demands.

They desire to respond in terms of the most emphatic concurrence and approbation to the view, which his Excellency is pleased to present of the mild and patriarchal character of the institution of domestic slavery in the southern states, its influence on national character and civil liberty and the nature of those obligations, resulting from our constitutional compact, and the principles of international law, upon which our tenure to this species of property so inviolably rests.

The present condition of the slave question in the states of this confederacy, presents one of the most extraordinary spectacles which, your committee will venture to assert, has ever challenged the notice of the civilized world. We see sovereign states, united by a common league, in about one half of which states, the institu-

tion of slavery not only exists, but its legal existance is solemnly recognized and guaranteed by their compact of union. Yet in the face of this compact, and the clear and distinct admission, that the non-slave-holding states have not the slightest right, either constitutionally or otherwise, to interfere with this institution, the most incendiary associations are tolerated or permitted to exist within their limits, the object and ends of which not only strike at the prosperity and happiness of eleven states in the confederacy, but at their very social existence.

Painful as it may be, it is impossible to disguise the fact, that this is a condition of things which cannot, in the long run, be permitted to exist. Every wise instinct of self-preservation forbids it. Let it be admitted, that the three millions of free white inhabitants in the slave-holding states are amply competent to hold in secure and pacific subjection the two millions of slaves, which, by the inscrutable dispensations of Providence, have been placed under our dominion. Let it be admitted, that, by reason of an efficient police and judicious internal legislation, we may render abortive the designs of the fanatic and incendiary within our own limits, and that the torrent of pamphlets and tracts which the abolition presses of the north are pouring forth with an inexhaustible copiousness, is arrested the moment it reaches our frontier. Are we to wait until our enemies have built up, by the grossest misrepresentations and falsehoods, a body of public opinion against us, which it would be almost impossible to resist, without separating ourselves from the social system of the rest of the civilized world? Or are we to sit down content, because, from our own vigilance and courage the torch of the incendiary and the dagger of the midnight assassin may never be applied? This is impossible. No people can live in a state of perpetual excitement and apprehension, although real danger may be long deferred. Such a condition of the public mind is destructive of all social happiness, and consequently must prove essentially injurious to the prosperity of a community that has the weakness to suffer under a perpetual panic. This would be true, if the causes of this excitement proceeded from the external hostility of a foreign nation. But how infinitely interesting and momentous the consideration becomes, when they flow from the acts aud doings of citizens of states, with whom

we are not only in amity, but to whom we are bound by the strongest bonds of a common union, which was framed to promote the happiness, peace, security, and protection of all.

We have, therefore, a claim on the governments of the non-slave-holding states, not only moral and social, but of indispensible constitutional obligation, that this nuisance shall be abated. They not only owe it to us, but they owe it to themselves, to that Union, at whose shrine they have so often offered up the highest pledges, by which man can plight his temporal faith.

Your committee would be inclined to recommend to this Legislature to make an explicit demand on the non-slave-holding states, for the passage of penal laws by their Legislatures, providing for the punishment of the incendiaries within their limits, who are engaged in an atrocious conspiracy against our right of property and life. But a cordial confidence, a fraternal feeling, and the comity which belongs to our social and political relations, forbid us for one moment to doubt, that every effort will be made by the states to whom this appeal is referable, to meet, not only our just expectations on this subject, but every emergency which belongs to this crisis of public peril. Indeed, when we remember the strong demonstrations of public opinion, which were presented at various gratifying public meetings, which were held during the last summer throughout the non-slave-holding states, denouncing as anti-social and unconstitutional the proceedings of the fanatics and incendiaries; when we remember, to the avowal universally made, by the public press, in those states, that a vast and overwhelming majority of their people, viewed such proceedings with horror and detestation, we cannot but believe that every rational expectation which the slave-holding states can cherish on this vital question, will be cheerfully met and responded to by those on whom we have such inviolable claims.

We concur entirely in the view which our own executive takes of the grounds, on which our right to demand the enactment of such conservative legislation rests.

Apart from all those obligations, resulting from the constitutional compact, which unites these states, and which make it the imperative duty of one member of this confederacy, not to allow its citizens to plot against the peace, property, and happiness of another member,

there is no principle of international law better established, than that even among foreign nations, such atrocious abuses are not to be tolerated, except at the peril of that high and ultimate penalty, by which a brave and free people vindicate their rights.

Your committee are aware, that it has been said, that no legislation can be adapted to arrest the proceedings of the abolitionists by the non-slave-holding states, without violating the great principle of the liberty of the press. We consider that this objection rests on no just foundation. There is certainly some difference between the freedom of discussion, and the liberty to deluge a friendly and coterminous state with seditious and incendiary tracts, pamphlets, and pictorial representations, calculated to excite a portion of its population to revolt, rapine, and blood-shed. We would fain believe, that the northern liberty of the press, would never be construed into a liberty, to lay the south in ashes. Under a law honestly passed, to meet this crime against society, and treason against the Union, the whole circumstances of the case, and the quo animo of the offender might be left to a jury to determine, like any other criminal issue, and if we are to believe in the condition of public opinion, as recently exhibited in most of the non-slave-holding states, we are far from thinking that such legislation would be a mere dead letter.

South Carolina will not anticipate the crisis, which must be presented by a refusal on the part of the non-slave-holding states, to accord to us the protection of such legislation, or such other means, as they may select for the suppression of the evils of which we complain, for she will not doubt the good faith and amity of her sister states. She desires to live in peace and harmony in the Union. In the assertion of her rights, and in preferring her claims to be secure in the enjoyment of her property, under the compact, she desires to act in entire concert with those states, whose interests are identified with her own. She is, however, prepared to do her duty to herself and posterity, under all and every possible conjecture of circumstances.

In conclusion, your committee, desirous of making a matter of record, both of our rights, and the assertion of the just expectation that they will be respected by those who are united with us in the bonds of a common union, beg leave to offer the following resolutions, for the adoption of both branches of the legislature.

1. *Resolved*, That the formation of the abolition societies, and the acts and doings of certain fanatics, calling themselves abolitionists, in the non-slave-holding states of this confederacy, are in direct violation of the obligations of the compact of union, dissocial, and incendiary in the extreme.

2. *Resolved*, That no state having a just regard for her own peace and security, can acquiesce in a state of things by which such conspiracies are engendered within the limits of a friendly state, united to her by the bonds of a common league of political association, without either surrendering or compromitting her most essential rights.

3. *Resolved*, That the legislature of South Carolina, having every confidence in the justice and friendship of the non-slave-holding states, announces to her co-states her confident expectation, and she earnestly requests that the governments of these states will promptly and effectually suppress all those associations within their respective limits, purporting to be abolition societies, and that they will make it highly penal to print, publish and distribute newspapers, pamphlets, tracts, and pictorial representations, calculated and having an obvious tendency to excite the slaves of the southern states to insurrection and revolt.

4. *Resolved*, That, regarding the domestic slavery of the southern states as a subject exclusively within the control of each of the said States, we shall consider every interference, by any other state, or the general government, as a direct and unlawful interference, to be resisted at once, and under every possible circumstance.

5. *Resolved*, In order that a salutary negative may be put on the mischievous and unfounded assumption of some of the abolionists, the non-slave-holding states are requested to disclaim by legislative declaration, all right, either on the part of themselves or the government of the United States, to interfere in any manner with domestic slavery, either in the states or in the territories where it exists.

6. *Resolved*, That we should consider the abolition of slavery in the district of Columbia, as a violation of the rights of the citizens of that district, derived from the implied conditions on which that territory was ceded to the general government, and as an usurpation to be at once resisted as nothing more than the commencement of a scheme of much more extensive and flagrant injustice.

7. *Resolved*, That the legislature of South Carolina regards with decided approbation, the measures of security adopted by the post office department of the United States, in relation to the transmission of incendiary tracts. But if this highly essential and protective policy, be counteracted by Congress, and the United States mail becomes a vehicle for the transmission of the mischievous documents, with which it was recently freighted, we, in this contingency, expect that the chief magistrate of our state will forthwith call the legislature together, that timely measures may be taken to prevent its traversing our territory.

8. *Resolved*, That the Governor be requested to transmit a copy of this report and resolutions to the executives of the several states, that they may be laid before their respective legislatures.

IN THE SENATE, 16th DECEMBER, 1835.

Resolved, That the Senate do agree, unanimously, to the report and resolutions. *Ordered*, They be sent to the House of Representatives for concurrence.

By order of the Senate.

JACOB WARLEY, *C. S.*

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, 16th DEC. 1835.

Resolved, That the House do concur unanimously in the report and resolutions. *Ordered*, They be returned to the Senate.

By order of the House.

JAS. S. MILES, *C. H. R.*

REPORT AND RESOLUTIONS

OF

GEORGIA.

C

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Council Chamber,
20th Jan. 1836.

To the Senate and House of Representatives.

I transmit, for the information of the Legislature, a communication from His Excellency the Governor of Georgia, accompanied by a report and resolutions of the General Assembly of that State. These papers relate to the same important topic, which forms the subject of the communications from their Excellencies the Governors of North Carolina and South Carolina, recently transmitted by me to the two houses, among the documents, accompanying the letter addressed to me, by his Honor the late Acting Governor of the Commonwealth.

EDWARD EVERETT.

House of Representatives, Jan. 21, 1836.

Referred, with the accompanying document, to the Committee, and so much of the Governor's address, as relates to the subject of slavery, with instructions to consider the expediency of causing the documents from the several states of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, to be printed.

Sent up for concurrence.

L. S. CUSHING, *Clerk.*

In Senate, Jan. 21, 1836.

Concurred:

CHS. CALHOUN, *Clerk.*

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT, GEORGIA,
Milledgeville, 29th December, 1835.

SIR,

In compliance with the request of the General Assembly of this State, I have the honor to transmit the subjoined copy of a report and resolutions, adopted at their late session, upon a subject of vital importance to the interests of the southern states, and to the stability of the institutions of our common country.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

WILLIAM SCHLEY.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, DEC. 19th, 1835.

The committee to whom was referred so much of the Governor's message as relates to the movements of the abolitionists of the north, have endeavored to bring to the consideration of the subject, that dispassionate deliberation its importance demands, and beg leave to make the following report:

They would remark, that the formation of our glorious union was a great experiment, made by patriotism in the cause of civil liberty. Thus far successful, its results have been most beneficial, spreading with unexampled profusion over our extensive country, blessings which distinguish her above all others. The offspring of common sufferings and common triumphs among the states, the preservation

of this Union is dependent upon a community of sympathy and good feeling among their respective people. Any attempt by a portion of the people of one state to interfere, even indirectly, with the domestic institutions of another, has the inevitable tendency to destroy that feeling. Such attempt is an insult to the state aggrieved, and the motives which impel it, are at entire variance with that fraternal spirit which constitutes the people of these states, brethren of one great family. But when such attempt involves, the safety of the people of a state—the robbery of their property—the desecration of their constitutional rights—the violation of their domestic peace—infatuation herself must admit, that such attempt, persevered in will inevitably convert pre-existent good feeling into deadly hostility—the certain consequences of which, are a sundered union, and all the horrors of civil commotion. That such attempt is being at this time made by certain fanatics, by the distribution of pamphlets, prints, circulars, annuals, almanacs, and every species of publication, your committee with mingled feelings of regret and indignation, believe cannot admit of doubt—yet it is a matter of heartfelt congratulation to the friends of union, that the general and spontaneous expression of feeling which has burst from the patriotism and intelligence of the north, affords the cheering hope, that her people are prepared to "frown indignantly upon the first dawning of every attempt to alienate any portion of our country from the rest, or to enfeeble the sacred ties which now link together the various parts." But notwithstanding the manifestation of this spirit, the movement of the domestic fanatic and foreign emisary, and the insidious means to which they resort, are fraught with so much peril to ourselves, our families, and our undoubted rights, that "stern necessity" and a just regard for the peace and harmony of our country demand that the people of this state, should in temperate and respectful but determined language, declare their unalterable determination to protect their domestic institutions and constitutional rights from all interference, direct or indirect, from any and every quarter. Upon this point, there can be no discussion—no compromise—no doubt.

They found their rights upon the guarantee afforded by the constitution of the United States—and if the provisions of that charter

are to be sacrificed to the spirit of fanaticism or the impulses of a false philanthropy, calamity and ruin will soon overwhelm this now happy confederacy. Impressed with the importance of the duty which devolves upon them at the present crisis, your committee, in addition to a bill in amendment of the laws regulating slaves and free persons of color within this state, would respectfully submit the following resolutions with a single remark, that if a rigor heretofore unknown to our domestic legislation be found in the features of the bill they have introduced, it has been forced upon them, by the movements of men, who, assuming to be the friends, are indeed the most cruel enemies of those whom they have taken under their especial care :

1. *Resolved*, That in this country, freedom of the press and freedom of speech are sacred and inviolable rights ; that in proportion to their sacredness and value, is the obligation to preserve them from the abuse of those who would prostitute them to the vile purpose of "enfeebling the sacred ties which now link together the various parts" of this happy Union.

2. *Resolved*, That the people of Georgia stand prepared to protect the domestic institutions of her sister states from the unauthorized interference of individuals or combinations within her limits.

3. *Resolved*, That the perpetuity of this glorious Union, which has shed such blessings on us as a people, is only to be ensured by a strict adherence to the letter of Constitution, which has guaranteed to us certain rights with which we will suffer no power on earth to interfere—that it is deeply incumbent on the people of the north to crush the traitorous designs of the abolitionists, and that we look with confidence to such movements on their part as will effectually put an end to impertinent, fanatical and disloyal interference with matters settled by the Constitution.

4. *Resolved*, That we hail the sentiments expressed by the resolutions of some of the recent meetings of the north, upon the subject of abolition, as the evidence of the existence of a right spirit among the great mass of our northern brethren, and a determination on their part to discharge the duties imposed upon them by the Constitution of their country, and the exigencies of the times.

5. *Resolved*, That the District of Columbia, and the several territories of the United States, are the common property of the people of these states—that the right of exclusive legislation in the former, and the power to make all needful rules and regulations for the government of the latter, which are vested in the Congress of the United States, are derived from the Constitution, which recognizes and guarantees the rights resulting from domestic slavery, and that any interference by that body with those rights, will be unauthorized by, and contrary to the spirit of that sacred charter of American liberty.

6. *Resolved*, That copies of the foregoing Preamble and Resolutions be transmitted by his Excellency to the President of the United States, the Governors of the respective states, and to the Senators and Representatives of this state in Congress.

Read and unanimously agreed to.

JOSEPH DAY,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Attest. JOSEPH STURGIS, *Clerk.*

In Senate, read and concurred in, 22d Dec., 1835.

ROBERT M. ECHOLS,
President of the Senate.

Attest. ARTHUR A. MORGAN, *Secretary.*

Approved, 22d Dec., 1835.

WILLIAM SCHLEY, *Governor.*

MEMORIAL AND RESOLUTIONS

OF

ALABAMA.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

To the Senate and House of Representatives.

I transmit to the two houses, copies of a letter recently received from his Excellency the Governor of Alabama, together with copies of an address and resolutions, adopted by both branches of the general assembly of that state, at their late session. These documents relate to a subject, to which the attention of the general court has already been respectfully invited. They are accordingly submitted to the two houses without comment, and in the assurance that, together with the papers of a similar character already communicated, they will receive such consideration, as may be due to the importance of their subject-matter, and to the source from which they emanate.

EDWARD EVERETT.

Council Chamber,
15th February, 1836.

House of Representatives, Feb. 15, 1836.

Referred to the Committee on so much of the Governor's Address as relates to the abolition of slavery, with instructions to consider the expediency of causing the same to be printed.

Sent up for concurrence.

L. S. CUSHING, *Clerk.*

In Senate, Feb. 15, 1836.

Concurred.

CHAS. CALHOUN, *Clerk.*

(COPY.)

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT, ALABAMA,
Tuskaloosa, Jan. 22d, 1836.

SIR,—In obedience to the instructions of both branches of the general assembly of this state, I have the honor to transmit the enclosed copy of an address and resolutions, adopted at their late session, with a request that you will lay them before the legislature of your state.

I have the honor to be,

Very respectfully,

Your obdt. servt.

C. C. CLAY.

His Excellency the Governor of Massachusetts.

A Memorial of the General Assembly of the State of Alabama, to the General Assemblies of the several States of the Union.

Your memorialists approach your honorable bodies with that confidence and good will which should characterize sisters of the same family. The hostility, which a small portion of your population have shown to the happiness and safety of our country, is not believed to have emanated from any settled intention of your citizens to do us an injury. The dark, deep and malignant design of the abolitionists who are settled amongst you, in sending to our country their agents and incendiary pamphlets and publications, lighting up fires of discord

in the bosoms of our slave population, have never for a moment alienated our affections from the great mass of your citizens, and we have believed, and still believe, that when you were fully apprised of the evils which this unholy band of cowardly assassins are bringing upon us, that you would extend your hands to avert the calamities which must otherwise fall upon our citizens. We were born in a land of domestic slavery—like our liberties, it descended from our fathers ; we were innocent of its introduction, and if it have evils, they are our own, which time and the wisdom of experience must avert, and we utterly deny the right of the citizens of any other state to claim an interference ; the harmony of the states, and the durabil ity of the Union, forbid any intermeddling upon the subject. Slavery in the United States is local and sectional ; it is confined to the southern and middle states. If it be an evil, it is their business to say so, and remove it.

Slavery existed in other states, and they put an end to it in their own way, without the disasters likely to be visited upon us, by malignant and heartless societies residing in other states. The abolitionists are not nnmerous, but they are wealthy, ardent and talented ; they have presses in the various parts of the Union, from which they issue millions of essays, pamphlets and pictures, and scatter them amongst our slave population, calculated to urge them to deluge our country in blood. This cannot be tolerated.

1st. *Be it therefore resolved, by the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Alabama, in General Assembly convened*, That it is the decided sense of this general assembly, that we call upon our sister states, and respectfully request them to enact such penal laws, as will finally put an end to the malignant deeds of the abolitionists, calculated to destroy our peace, and sever this Union.

2d. *Resolved*, That we should consider the abolition of slavery in the district of Columbia, unless by the desire of its own citizens, as a violation of the rights of that district, derived from the implied condition on which that territory was ceded to the general government, and as the commencement of a scene of usurpation and flagrant injustice.

3d. *Resolved*, That the executive of the state of Alabama communicate a copy of this memorial to the governor of each of the

states of the Union, with a request that it may be laid before their next legislatures, and also that a copy be sent to each of our senators and representatives in Congress.

J. W. M. CLUNG,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

SAMUEL B. MOORE,
President of the Senate.

Approved, January 7, 1836.

C. C. CLAY.

A true copy from the rolls.

E. A. WEBSTER, *Secretary of State.*

RESOLUTIONS

OF

VIRGINIA.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

To the Senate and House of Representatives,

I have recently received a letter from his Excellency the Governor of Virginia, accompanied with a copy of resolutions of both houses of the Legislature of that state, on the subject of slavery.

Agreeably to the request contained in the letter of Governor Tazewell, copies of the aforesaid resolutions are herewith communicated, and respectfully submitted to the consideration of the two houses.

EDWARD EVERETT.

Council Chamber, 2d March, 1836.

In Senate, March 2, 1836.

Referred to the Joint Committee on the subject of the Abolition of Slavery.

Sent down for concurrence.

CHAS. CALHOUN, *Clerk.*

House of Representatives, March 3, 1836.

Concurred.

L. S. CUSHING, *Clerk.*

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT,
Richmond, Virginia, February 18, 1836.

SIR,

In compliance with a request of the General Assembly of Virginia, I have the honor to forward you herewith, a copy of certain resolutions adopted by both the houses composing that body, on the 16th instant, to which I beg leave to add my request that you will submit the same to the Legislature of your state.

I am, very repectfully,

Your most obedient servant,

LITT'N W. TAZEWELL.

To His Excellency the Governor of Massachusetts.

1. *Resolved*, That this Commonwealth only, has the right to control or interfere with the subject of domestic slavery within its limits, and that this right will be maintained at all hazards.

2. *Resolved*, That the state of Virginia has a right to claim prompt and efficient legislation by her co-states to restrain as far as may be, and to punish, those of their citizens, who, in defiance of the obligations of social duty and those of the Constitution, assail her safety and tranquility, by forming associations for the abolition of slavery, or printing, publishing, or circulating through the mail or otherwise, seditious and incendiary publications, designed, calculated, or having a tendency to operate on her population, and that this right, founded as it is on the principles of international law, is peculiarly fortified by a just consideration of the intimate and sacred relations that exist between the states of this Union.

3. *Resolved*, That the non-slave-holding states of the Union are respectfully, but earnestly requested, promptly to adopt penal enactments, or such other measures as will effectually suppress all associations within their respective limits, purporting to be, or having the character of, abolition societies; and that they will make it highly penal to print, publish, or distribute, newspapers, pamphlets, or other publications, calculated or having a tendency to excite the slaves of the southern states to insurrection and revolt.

4. *Resolved*, That we have seen with satisfaction, those expressions of public opinion of our northern brethren, favorable to the rights of the southern states, and in condemnation of the conduct and motives of the abolitionists among them; and that, confiding in their justice and attachment to the principles of the Union, enforced by the sympathies of common dangers, sufferings and triumphs, which ought to bind us together in fraternal concord, we are warranted in the expectation, that the foregoing request will be received and complied with in the spirit in which it is made.

5. *Resolved*, That Congress has no constitutional power to abolish slavery in the district of Columbia, or in the territories of the United States.

6. *Resolved*, That this General Assembly would regard any Act of Congress having for its object the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, or the territories of the United States, as affording just cause of alarm to the slave-holding states, and bringing the Union into imminent peril.

7. *Resolved*, That it is highly expedient for the slave-holding states to enact such laws and regulations as may be necessary to suppress and prevent the circulation of any incendiary publication within their respective limits.

8. *Resolved*, That the Governor be, and he is hereby requested to forward a copy of these Resolutions to each of our Senators and Representatives in Congress, and to the Executive of each of the states of the Union, with a request that the same may be submitted to their respective Legislatures.

Agreed to by both Houses of the Legislature of Virginia. February 16, 1836.

GEORGE W. MUNFORD, *C. H. D.*

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